



PRESS RELEASE
*Office of the United States Attorney
Middle District of Florida*

PAUL I. PEREZ
UNITED STATES ATTORNEY

400 North Tampa Street
Suite 3200
Tampa, Florida 33602
813/274-6000
813/274-6300 (Fax)

300 North Hogan Street
Suite 700
Jacksonville, Florida 32201
904/301-6300
904/301-6310 (Fax)

501 West Church Street
Suite 300
Orlando, Florida 32805
407/648-7500
407/648-7643 (Fax)

2110 First Street
Suite 3-137
Fort Myers, Florida 33901
239/461-2200
239/461-2219 (fax)

Contact: Steve Cole ♦ Public Affairs Specialist ♦ 813/274-6352

For Immediate Release

February 22, 2005

METHAMPHETAMINE CONSPIRATOR SENTENCED TO LIFE

Tampa, Florida - James Edward Howze, Jr., also known as "Fast Eddie", was sentenced to life imprisonment on Friday, February 18, 2005, by the Honorable U.S. District Judge Elizabeth A. Kovachevich. Howze, age 49, of Zephyrhills, pled guilty to charges brought against him in two federal indictments: one returned by a grand jury in Tampa, charging him with conspiring to manufacture methamphetamine; and another returned by a grand jury in Gainesville, charging him with possessing a sawed-off shotgun after being convicted of a felony. Howze traveled with a shotgun from Zephyrhills to Gainesville, in search of ingredients needed to make more methamphetamine.

Mr. Howze organized and directed numerous persons in the processing of methamphetamine in Hernando, Hillsborough, Lake, Pasco, Polk, and Sumter counties, creating toxic waste sites and hazards whenever they "cooked" this highly addictive drug, primarily in rural areas and in hotels. He instructed persons to buy or steal the ingredients necessary to brew the mixture, and paid them with a portion of the drugs he made with

those ingredients. Howze made and sold pure methamphetamine, which is most often injected with a syringe and can be deadly. From 2002 through 2003, Howze also taught several people how to cook, and fueled their addictions by involving them in the process.

The case represents the culmination of a cooperative effort between the United States Attorney's Office, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, the Drug Enforcement Administration,, the Pasco County Sheriff's Office and the Polk County Sheriff's Office. This is another case prosecuted as a part the Department of Justice program "Project Safe Neighborhoods" - a nationwide gun violence reduction initiative with strong support from the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF). United States Attorney Paul I. Perez is coordinating the cooperative effort here in the Middle District of Florida with federal, state and local law enforcement officials. The objective is to reduce violent crime by locating and seizing unlawfully possessed guns and then swiftly prosecuting the offenders using both federal and state gun laws.

"When we started Project Safe Neighborhoods we promised aggressive enforcement and prosecution that would result in the removal of violent criminals from our streets. This life sentence will send a strong message to other criminals that they will face hard times for gun crimes."

The case was investigated by the Drug Enforcement Administration, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, the Pasco County Sheriff's Office and the Polk County Sheriff's Office. The case was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Pamela C. Marsh.